

21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Medicare Reform Legislation
November 22, 2003

The House's historic passage of the bipartisan Medicare bill brings seniors one step closer to a modern Medicare system, one that includes prescription drugs and choices for seniors. I applaud the House for meeting our obligations to America's seniors. Now it is time for the Senate to act. I urge the Senate to pass this good piece of legislation so that I can sign it into law.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2004
November 22, 2003

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 2559, the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2004." The Act appropriates funds for construction to support the operations of the U.S. Armed Forces and for military family housing.

Sections 107, 110, and 113 provide for notice to the Congress of relocation of activities between military installations, initiation of a new installation abroad, or U.S. military exercises involving \$100,000 in construction costs. The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that the President's authority to classify and control access to information bearing on national security flows from the Constitution and does not depend upon a legislative grant of authority. Although notice can be provided in most situations as a matter of comity, situations may arise, especially in wartime, in which the President must act promptly under his constitutional grants of executive power and authority as Commander in Chief while protecting sensitive national security information. The ex-

ecutive branch shall construe these sections in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

Section 119 provides for the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress with details of proposed actions to encourage certain cooperating nations to assume a greater share of the common defense burden. Section 128 of the Act establishes a commission of eight congressionally-designated members to study the U.S. military facility structure overseas and provides for commission access to information. The executive branch shall construe sections 119 and 128 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, the national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

George W. Bush

The White House,
 November 22, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 2559, approved November 22, was assigned Public Law No. 108-132.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 24, 2003

Thank you all. Welcome. Thanks for coming. Good morning, and welcome to the Rose Garden. In a moment you can come up and welcome our guest of honor, Stars the turkey. He looks pretty friendly. He actually looks well rested. You'd be well rested, too, if you had your own room in Hotel Washington here in Washington, DC. [Laughter] It sounds like Stars wants to give the speech.

I appreciate you joining me to give this turkey a Presidential pardon. Stars is a very special bird with a very special name. This year, for the first time, thousands of people voted on the White House web site to name the national turkey and the alternate turkey. "Stars" and "Stripes" beat out "Pumpkin" and "Cranberry." And it was a neck-to-neck race. [Laughter]

Under the official rules, the alternate turkey has an important role, not to be taken lightly. The rulebook states that an alternate turkey is chosen in case the national Thanksgiving turkey cannot fulfill his role in this

ceremony. It's kind of like being the Vice President. [Laughter]

Our Nation's sense of gratitude is the source of great generosity of our people. Some of the boys and girls here today have done their part this year. Fifth graders from Flint Hill School collected the fixings and made sandwiches for people at the local homeless shelter. Through your compassion, you're showing the goodness of America, and we are really proud of you. Thanks for doing that.

I want to thank our Secretary of Agriculture for joining us today. Secretary Ann Veneman is doing a great job for our country. I want to thank Bob Wright, who's the chairman of the National Turkey Federation, for joining today. I appreciate Dr. Alice Johnson, who's the president. Thanks for coming, Alice.

Today marks a—and continues a long White House tradition. We're honoring the beginning of a holiday season. It speaks well for America that one of our most important holidays is set aside for sharing and appreciating our blessings. Our Nation was founded by people of great accomplishment, great courage, and great humility. They believed not only in themselves but also in the goodness of God's wisdom and God's plan for every life. This American quality has endured throughout the generations. Americans are, at our best, are a reverent and a grateful people. Even in times of hardship, we see all around us gifts to be thankful for, our families and friends, the beautiful land we call home, and the freedom granted to us all.

This year, as in other times in our history, we can be especially grateful for the courage and faithfulness of those who defend us. Every man and woman who wears our country's uniform is a volunteer, facing hardships and sometimes peril, because they believe in this country and our cause. We're thinking of them and their families. We think of the military families that have suffered loss. We can be grateful to live in a country that has produced such good and brave people who stand between us and the dangers of the world.

On this holiday, we're reminded of our blessings. We're reminded of our responsibilities. Our Nation's sense of gratitude is the

source of the great generosity and compassion of our people.

And now it's time to grant a little compassion to our guest of honor. I'm not sure why any turkey would want to reside at a place called Frying Pan Park. [Laughter] Maybe they explained the alternatives to him. [Laughter] In any case, off he goes. By virtue of the Presidential pardon, Stars will live out his days there at Kidwell Farm in Virginia. And so he won't be alone, I hereby pardon Stripes as well.

Happy Thanksgiving to you. May God bless you and your families. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 in Arlington, Virginia

November 24, 2003

Thank you for the warm welcome, and good morning. I'm honored to be here at the Pentagon with the men and women who are defending America and who are fighting the war on terror. America is counting on your skill and courage.

People in our military depend upon the support of the Congress and the President and the administration. Today, with the National Defense Authorization Act, our Government is meeting its obligations. We're sending a clear message: In a time of conflict and challenge, America stands with the United States military.

Mr. Secretary, you are doing a fantastic job for America. You lead with courage; you lead with clear vision; and you lead with strength. I appreciate General Dick Myers and the members of the Joint Chiefs who are with us. Thank you for your great service to our country. I want to thank the ranking enlisted personnel who are with us today, Sergeant Major John Estrada and Master Chief Petty Officer Terry Scott. I appreciate you all being up here as well. Thank you for your fine service. I want to thank the Department of Defense personnel who are with us today. Thank you for working with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz and